Growing and Sustaining the Peer Workforce: Human Resources Best Practices

Supervision of Peer Workforce Conference March 25, 2020

Handout:

Practices to Advance Workforce Integration[[1]](#footnote-1)

Recruitment and Hiring

* Organizations identify job posting networks to reach appropriate Peer Specialist applicants.
* Post job openings and descriptions at community centers that offer self-help support groups seeking candidates with lived experience
* Interviewers are familiar with questions that evaluate competencies of PS applicants.
* Interviewers are familiar with prohibited questions about an applicant’s illness, disability or diagnosis.
* Interviewers are able to respond accurately to PS applicant concerns about potential loss of benefits with a change in employment status.
* PS Job descriptions include the following:
	+ Core responsibilities and examples of duties to be assigned
	+ Overview of organization’s main programs
	+ Required schedule
	+ Instructions for applying
	+ Teams and employees who will work and interact with the PS

Orientation and acculturation

* Before a new employee begins work, a specific workspace is identified with available supplies and technology
* New peer workers are informed regarding
	+ Standards of conduct and employee rights and responsibilities (privacy, emergency and crisis procedures)
	+ Staff contact information, including a point person on site for information and questions about daily operations;
	+ Descriptions of coworker roles;
	+ Dates and times of ongoing meetings and upcoming events
	+ Orientation to the overall agency mission, structure and operations, as well as the mission and function of the division to which the peer worker is assigned and their role within it
	+ An agency organizational chart with names and titles
	+ An agency directory with names, email addresses and telephone numbers

Peer Employment: Role Clarity and Work Assignments

* All employees are familiar with the peer worker role.
* Employees have opportunities to learn more about peer worker roles and responsibilities.
* Peer workers are included in team projects and as team members.
* All employees are familiar with respective tasks, roles and responsibilities. All roles are described in work assignments and all involved contribute to reviewing and updating workflow assignments.

Supervision- important factors for supervisors of peer workers:

* Availability and schedule
* Prior experience and/or knowledge of peer support work
* Willingness to supervise
* Knowledge of supervision concepts and materials
* Continuing to receive supervision themselves
* Awareness of the difference between supervision and clinical support
* Encouragement of career advancement

Career Advancement

* Advanced peer worker positions exist (supervisor, mentor, etc.) for peer workers whose performance and experience suggest their eligibility.
* Higher pay is provided for more advanced peer worker positions.
* Organizational training officers inform peer workers about relevant training opportunities.
* Training events are scheduled so employees from numerous disciplines can attend.
* Schedule accommodations are available to allow and encourage employees to attend trainings.

Organizational Culture and Practice

Attitudes and beliefs

* Leaders understand the general attitude of most non-peer workers towards peer workers and proceed accordingly.
* Organizations attend to questions and concerns of non-peer workers about working with them.

Diversity and Inclusion

* Organizations identify and remove workplace barriers to equity related to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, age or other personal characteristics.
* Organizational leaders, managers and staff understand the specific ways that inequity can manifest relative to employees’ roles, such as youth peer advocates who experience ageism; or criminal justice-involved peers experiencing hiring barriers because of prior records.

Financing and Sustainability

* Compensation for peer workers is equitable relative to compensation for other organizational roles.
* Human resources staff and managers are familiar with standards for billing and Medicaid reimbursement for peer workers.
* Funding is allocated to hire and maintain support of peer workers.
1. Adapted and paraphrased from NYC Peer and Community Health Worker Workforce Consortium (2020). Workforce Integration of Peer and Community Health Worker Roles. Action Planning and Implementation Guide, Appendix C. Recommended Practices for Workforce Integration. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/>[doh/downloads/pdf/peer/action-planning-and-implementation](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/peer/action-planning-and-implementation)... [↑](#footnote-ref-1)